BATMAN CONFIDENTIAL

"RULES OF ENGAGEMENT"

Part 1 of 6

by

Andy Diggle

Third Draft

PAGE 1

We start with a series of full-width panels, gradually pulling back in a continuous "reverse-zoom"...

1) The night-time cityscape of Gotham City. Slum housing blocks tower impossibly high, fire escapes clambering up their sides like black iron vines...

Note to letterer: The only captions in this series are Batman's internal monologue.

CAPTION
WIND. TRAFFIC. SIRENS. MUSIC.

CAPTION
FROM THIS HEIGHT, THE SOUNDS OF THE CITY MELD INTO A DULL ROAR...

MOTHER
(off-panel)
IT WON'T ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS, KATY. IT'LL ALL BE WORTH IT, YOU'LL SEE.
(link)
WE'LL HEAD OUT WEST, SOMEWHERE BIG AND WIDE AND OPEN...

2) Pull back to reveal we are viewing the cityscape through the bedroom window of a cheap, grimy apartment; nasty old curtains to either side...

CAPTION
... LIKE A GREAT BEAST, BREATHING.

MOTHER
AND YOU'LL GO TO SCHOOL AND PLAY LITTLE LEAGUE AND GET SCABBY KNEES CLIMBING TREES IN THE SUNSHINE.
(link)
AND MOMMY WON'T HAVE TO... DO WHAT SHE DOES ANYMORE.

3) Pull back further into the room. In the foreground, a young MOTHER is putting her one-year old daughter to bed, placing her gently in the cot. The mother's a low-end hooker, but she loves her daughter more than life itself, and we can see that love in her sad, tender smile. Her daughter smiles back, reaching one chubby little hand up towards her. The apartment is cheap, cramped and worn-out, with peeling wallpaper and yard-sale furniture; but the funny-animal mobile hanging over the baby's cot is bright, colorful and new.

CAPTION
IT *SPEAKS* TO ME.

MOTHER
AND WE'LL LAUGH.

4) Pull back further. The mother suddenly turns her head towards us with a look of alarm, realizing someone's standing there off-panel --

CAPTION
BUT IT'S NOT TELLING ME ANYTHING I NEED TO *HEAR*.

CAPTION
UNTIL ONE SOUND CUTS THROUGH.

MOTHER
OH - !

5) Pull back further, to reveal the silhouette of a MAN standing in the doorway, looking into the bedroom. The woman's face falls; her shoulders sag, resigned; her eyes are now filled with fear and deep, deep sadness...

CAPTION
TRIGGERS A RESPONSE.

CAPTION
LIKE ALWAYS.

MOTHER
(small text)
P-- PLEASE. TELL HIM... TELL HIM HE CAN'T HAVE HER.
(link)
I WON'T LET HIM.

<u>PAGE 2</u>

FULL-PAGE SPLASH! High above the city streets, BATMAN leaps into action! Swinging across the city on a throwing line, his cape sweeping out magnificently behind him like great black wings, his white eye-slits narrowed and intense, a fierce avenger --

This story is set sometime in Bruce Wayne's second year as Batman, so he's younger here than in "current" continuity. Less seasoned, less controlled, less sure of himself; more susceptible to bouts of sudden anger, or self-doubt. Somewhat darker, a little rougher around the edges...

CAPTION
THE SOUND OF SCREAMING.

TITLE AND CREDITS
BATMAN CONFIDENTIAL:
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (PART 1)

PAGE 3

1) Batman swoops down towards the fire escape of the hooker's apartment building. Up ahead of him, the fire escape catwalk runs beneath two windows; the living room window is dark, the glass smashed; the bedroom window is intact and illuminated.

CAPTION
EVEN BEFORE I REACH THE APARTMENT WINDOW, I KNOW I'M TOO LATE --

2) Low angle, worm's eye view. Inside the darkened living room now, Batman stands looming over the dead body of the young mother. This should be an "all ages" book, so we need to suggest the horror of the murder rather than show it too explicitly - say, with just the woman's bloody hand lying claw-fingered in the foreground. Batman is little more than a huge black silhouette here, with the broken window visible behind him...

CAPTION
ANOTHER LIFE I FAILED TO SAVE.

CAPTION
HOW MANY MORE?

3) Reverse angle, so we're now looking down over Batman's shoulder from above, looking down at her body on the floor. Fortunately for us, Batman obscures her face and upper body, but we can see there's a lot of blood on the floor around her. One of her shoes lies half-off her foot; the other shoe lies on the carpet, halfway to the bedroom door through which light spills...

CAPTION
SHE STRUGGLED. GAVE HER BEST. BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH.

CAPTION
HE DRAGGED HER IN HERE. HE PINNED HER DOWN.

CAPTION
AND HE BEAT HER TO DEATH WITH HIS BARE HANDS.

4) In the lit bedroom now, Batman stands over the baby's cot. The little girl stands in the cot, reaching up to grasp his black-gloved fingertip with her chubby little hand. Batman looks down at her; grim, implacable, his face unreadable...

CAPTION
SMALL GRACE - THE LITTLE ONE DIDN'T SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO HER MOTHER.

5) Small inset. Extreme close on Batman's eyes, narrowed, extremely intense. We can only imagine the anger, bitterness and regret in his own heart...

CAPTION
SHE WAS SPARED THAT, AT LEAST...

PAGE 4

This page is made of up twelve small panels, each one an extreme close-up of some part of the apartment. We want to convey Batman's meticulous attention to detail as he methodically checks for clues. He is the Dark Knight *Detective*, after all...

1) Four different heavy locks on the apartment's inside front door. Dead-bolts, security chains, peep-hole. Serious security.

CAPTION
TRIPLE LOCKED.

2) A bottle of mouthwash and a box of tissues sit next to the bedside alarm clock.

3) Close on the baby's wide eyes, watching, nervous but curious; Batman's silhouette reflected in them.

CAPTION
WHOEVER SHE WAS TRYING TO KEEP OUT, IT DIDN'T WORK.

4) The dead woman's shoe lies on its side on the carpet, the bedroom light casting a long shadow.

5) The shattered window.

CAPTION
HE CAME IN FROM THE FIRE ESCAPE.

6) Happy, smiling animals on the baby's cot mobile, bright and colorful.

7) A baseball bat lies under the bed.

8) A wad of wet newspaper lies scrunched-up on the floor beneath the broken window, broken glass wadded up in it.

CAPTION
WET NEWSPAPER TO MUFFLE THE
BREAKING GLASS.

CAPTION
OLD SCHOOL.

9) A two-door wardrobe in the living room, one door slightly ajar; blackness within.

10) Blood pools, soaking into the living room carpet beside the dead woman's hand. A boot-print has tracked her blood further out onto the carpet.

CAPTION
BLOODY BOOT-PRINTS ON THE FLOOR...

11) A boot-print on the window-ledge, broken glass crushed into glittering powder beneath the tread. But no blood...

CAPTION
... BUT NONE ON THE WINDOWSILL.

12) Extreme close on Batman's eye, suddenly widening as the realization hits him --

CAPTION
HE'S STILL HERE - !

PAGE 5

1) BIG! A HIRED KILLER suddenly BURSTS out of the wardrobe in the living room, firing RIGHT AT US with silenced, laser-sighted micro-Uzi machine pistols in each hand! Long, fat muzzle flashes, each weapon spewing a string of spent cartridge cases. He wears black gloves, "urban camo" combat pants, a bomber jacket, and a fearsome hockey mask sprayed with gray zebra stripes. In the foreground, Batman dramatically DIVE-ROLLS aside just in the nick of time as the bullets chew a twin trail of destruction through the floor, spitting up carpet fluff and wood splinters --

CAPTION
TWIN UZIS.

CAPTION
SILENCED.

2) Still rolling, Batman THROWS a batarang STRAIGHT AT US in one fluid movement --

3) The batarang SMASHES the machine-pistol from the Killer's right hand --

CAPTION
BETTER.

KILLER
(jagged)
AAGH - !

PAGE 6

1) The Killer FIRES right at us with the other Uzi; a deep perspective, in-yer-face image --

KILLER
EAT IT!

2) Batman DIVES through a narrow serving hatch which leads from the back of the living room into the kitchen; the trail of bullet impacts tracks him relentlessly --

3) Over the shoulder shot. The Killer aims into the darkened, open doorway of the kitchen. Blackness within.

KILLER
THAT'S RIGHT, FREAK! YOU BETTER HIDE!

4) Same angle. The Killer swings the weapon to the right, now aiming through the open bedroom doorway - straight at the BABY GIRL, who stands in her cot, watching quietly, oblivious as to what's about to happen...

BABY
(jagged)
WAAAAAAH!

KILLER
NOW THEN. WHERE AS I... ?

5) The Killer FIRES - just as Batman SWINGS IN from the kitchen door-frame, KICKING the Uzi aside! It fires wild, up and away --

KILLER
(off-panel right)
... OH YEAH.

6) Batman delivers a powerful and precise STRAIGHT-LEG KICK, his body tilted back to line up perfectly along the line of force, delivering every foot-pound of pressure straight into the Killer's abdomen. The Killer flies back as if his butt was tied to a speeding car, the machine pistol spinning from his hand --

7) The Killer CRASHES back into a coffee table --

PAGE 7

1) The baby girl stands in her cot, SCREAMING --

BATMAN
WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE REACHING FOR...
(link)
DON'T.

2) Badly winded, the Killer tosses TWO M67 FRAGMENTATION GRENADES towards us; their safety pins already out, the spring-loaded striker levers spinning away --

3) Batman DIVES in through the bedroom door --

CAPTION
NO.

4) He GRABS the screaming child, hauling her into the air by the scruff of her sleep-suit --

BABY
(jagged)
WWWAAAAAAH!

5) Batman SLAMS back against the wall next to the bedroom door, shielding the tiny child with his body, his cape wrapped around them both. The two grenades EXPLODE in the living room beyond, sending shrapnel blasting through the bedroom door, LACERATING the cot and SHREDDING the mobile into tiny pieces --

6) Batman's POV, looking into the wrecked, shrapnel-blasted living room. Empty. The windows completely blown out now. The Killer is gone...

CAPTION
GONE.

CAPTION
TRIED TO KILL THE CHILD.

7) Small inset. Close on Batman, snarling with pure, feral rage --

CAPTION
NOT IN MY CITY.

PAGE 8

1) Up on the rooftops of Gotham; a jungle of rusty water towers and bristling TV antennae. The Killer runs for his life, sprinting towards the gaping chasm between two buildings --

CAPTION
THE ALLEYWAY AHEAD OF HIM MUST BE TWENTY FEET ACROSS.

CAPTION
THINKS HE CAN MAKE IT.

2) Low angle view from down in the alley between the two buildings, looking straight up at the narrow slot of sky above. The Killer is LEAPING halfway across the gap, at the height of his arc; but the Bat-rope WHIPS around his neck! The line is taut, the Bat-shaped grapple spinning around and around the Killer's neck, yanking him short in mid-leap --

CAPTION
PROBABLY WOULD HAVE.

KILLER
ULK-!

3) High angle, looking down the side of the building as the Killer CRASHES into the wall, dangling from the rope around his neck. They alley stretches down to infinity below him. He clutches desperately at the line with both hands to keep himself from strangling, his legs flailing uselessly --

KILLER
GGH--
(link)
HHK - !

4) Killer's POV, looking up the wall to see BATMAN looming over us, his boot planted on the edge of the roof, gripping the taut line; teeth gritted, fierce --

BATMAN
SCARY, ISN'T IT?
(link)
TO KNOW YOUR LIFE'S IN ANOTHER MAN'S HANDS? TO FEEL IT SLIPPING AWAY?

5) Extreme close on Batman, mean --

BATMAN
DO YOU THINK THAT'S HOW *SHE* FELT?
(link)
HELPLESS... ?

6) Extreme close on the Killer's eye, wide with pure terror behind the hockey mask --

PAGE 9

1) Batman hauls the Killer up by the lapels, snarling into his face --

BATMAN
YOUR LIFE COULD END RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW, AND NOBODY WOULD EVER KNOW. WOULD THE WORLD BE ANY POORER WITHOUT YOU?
(link)
TELL ME, PUNK - WHAT'S YOUR LIFE WORTH...?

KILLER
P-PLEASE--
(link)
P-PLEASE DON'T KILL ME - !

2) Low angle. Batman throws him to the rooftop at his feet, intimidating --

BATMAN
I CAN DO WORSE THAN KILL YOU.
(link)
YOU'RE NO BURGLAR - PETTY THIEVES DON'T CARRY MILITARY-GRADE HARDWARE. WHO SENT YOU? WHO BOUGHT THE HIT, AND WHY...?

3) The Killer kneels, a broken man, rubbing his sore throat.

KILLER
I-- I CAN'T TELL YOU...

4) Closer. A ruby-red LASER AIMING SPOT hovers against his hockey mask --

CAPTION
LASER SPOT - !

KILLER
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'D--

5) BZAM! The Killer suddenly EXPLODES as a pencil-thin beam of pure energy LANCES through him from off-panel! All of his body fluid is turned into an expanding cloud of superheated vapor in an instant, sending his hockey-mask flying, his clothing blasting outwards in shreds. Batman is knocked back off his feet by the shockwave --

BATMAN
GET DOWN - !

PAGE 10

1) Low angle, looking across at Batman, who was knocked back on his ass by the blast. He is momentarily stunned, appalled. Steam rises from the foreground...

CAPTION
TOO LATE.

CAPTION
ONE MOMENT I'M LOOKING RIGHT AT HIM...

CAPTION
... AND THE NEXT, I'M *BREATHING HIM IN.*

2) Steam rises from the empty eye sockets of the fallen hockey mask. It lies on a greasy black blast-mark - all that's left of the Killer...

CAPTION
BARBECUE SMELL. CARBONIZED PROTEIN.

CAPTION
NOTHING LEFT BUT A FEW CENTS' WORTH OF TRACE CHEMICALS.

3) Alert and dynamic, Batman turns away from us, gazing out across the city through a pair of tiny, high-tech BINOCULARS. In the distance, fully two kilometers away, is one particularly tall Art Deco skyscraper with a pointed spire...

CAPTION
SOME KIND OF ENERGY WEAPON.

CAPTION
IMPOSSIBLE SHOT...

4) This panel might work best as a staggered sequence of several panels, zooming in. It's Batman's POV through the high-tech binoculars, electronically zooming-in on the skyscraper two kilometers away. Electronic HUD-style graphics pinpoint a blurry, inhuman, ape-like SILHOUETTE as it leaps down from a ledge; it's carrying what looks like a squat, bulky, bazooka-like rifle with a heavy-duty power cable.

This indistinct figure is actually one of the G.I. ROBOTS we'll be meeting later in the series; and while we don't see it clearly here, it'll eventually play a major role in the story (and hopefully be incorporated into the DC Universe), so it's worth spending some time on the design. It's a huge, powerful war robot, 8 feet tall, with a thin waist and a massively broad and powerful upper body. Something like a cross between the fearsome Cain cyborg from ROBOCOP 2, Briareos from APPLESEED, and a VOTOMS gundam (I can send you some visual ref for inspiration, if you like!). Its head is somewhat reminiscent of a modern American soldier's helmet, with a single fat eye-lens and several smaller lenses clustered around it, like spider-eyes. Articulated sections of armor-plate around its eyes give it some degree of expressivity. Huge ape-like arms, numerous fold-out weapons and secondary appendages, lots of exposed hydraulics. Of course, all we see in this panel is a small, blurry silhouette; but we'll want the reader to recognize its shape later...

CAPTION
UNLESS THEY WEREN'T AIMING AT HIM...

5) Extreme close on Batman's eyes as he lowers the binocs, frowning; pissed-off, grim, deep in thought...

CAPTION
... BUT ME?

PAGE 11

1) BIG, high-angle establishing shot of the BAT CAVE - a vast, cathedral-like limestone cavern, with a network of high-tech platforms and narrow catwalks poised high above the black, bottomless chasm. Batman/Bruce Wayne sits slumped in a control chair in front of a huge computer screen, his cape spread out around him like the Phantom of the Opera. His mask is pulled back, hanging loose behind his neck. Lost in thought, he gazes at a small object lying in the palm of his hand - although we're too distant to make out what it is yet...

ALFRED walks down a long, long stairway towards him, carrying a silver breakfast tray. The cave is equipped with state-of-the-art computer systems, but no sign of the familiar giant penny or robot dinosaur - this is a flashback story, and Batman hasn't yet acquired these famous souvenirs.

He doesn't even have a Bat-Plane... yet. In later issues we'll be descending into the cave's lower levels, so let's lay the groundwork here to suggest a vast, bottomless network of labyrinthine catacombs...

ALFRED
COFFEE, EGGS BENEDICT AND THE DAILY PLANET, MASTER BRUCE.
(link)
I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PRESUMING YOU WOULD BE TAKING BREAKFAST IN THE CAVE THIS MORNING.

2) Move in closer. In the foreground, Alfred places the breakfast tray on a console. Silver coffee pot, bone china, silver lid on the breakfast plate, neatly-folded newspaper. A neatly-folded tea towel hangs over Alfred's arm. He looks over to Batman/Wayne, who sits slumped in the huge control chair, lost in deep contemplation of a black Colt .45 automatic handgun that rests in his palm in his lap...

ALFRED
MASTER BRUCE? THAT GUN, IS IT... ?

BATMAN
THE ONE *HE* USED.
(link)
THAT NIGHT.
(link)
ON *THEM*.

3) Closer still on Batman/Wayne; lost in thought, almost hypnotized by the gun, and the memories it conjures up for him...

BATMAN
I TOOK IT FROM THE G.C.P.D. EVIDENCE DEPOSITORY LAST YEAR. THERE WAS NOTHING MORE THEY COULD LEARN FROM IT...

PAGE 12

1) Batman/Wayne pulls back the pistol's slide - ejecting an unspent bullet, which pings up into the air from the open breech. Alfred straightens, quietly disapproving, but too reserved to really show it. His mouth a little tight, eyebrows raised.

ALFRED
I SEE.
(link)
AND WHAT PRECISELY DID YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY STEALING YOUR PARENTS' MURDER WEAPON, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD AS TO ENQUIRE... ?

(link)
BEYOND AN INCREASED CAPACITY FOR MORBID INTROSPECTION, THAT IS.

2) Close on Batman/Wayne, now staring intently at the .45 bullet which he holds up between thumb and forefinger in the extreme foreground...

BATMAN
HE FIRED TWO ROUNDS. 117-GRAIN HOLLOWPOINTS, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS APIECE FROM ANY GUN STORE.
(link)
IS THAT ALL THEIR LIVES WERE WORTH, ALFRED? FIFTY CENTS OF AMMUNITION... ?
(link)
HE LEFT FOUR ROUNDS IN THE CLIP, ONE IN THE BREECH. DROPPED IT AND RAN - AFRAID TO FINISH WHAT HE STARTED...
(link)
... AND I JUST STOOD THERE, HELPLESS.

3) Close on Alfred; kindness and compassion in his eyes.

ALFRED
THE GOOD YOUR PARENTS DID LIVES ON, MASTER BRUCE. AND I, FOR ONE, AM *GLAD* HE LEFT THOSE FINAL ROUNDS IN THE GUN.
(link)
I HAPPEN TO BELIEVE THE WORLD IS BETTER SERVED FOR HAVING YOU IN IT.

4) Batman/Wayne closes his fist around the bullet, turns his chair away from us as if ashamed of himself...

BATMAN
...
(link)
... THERE WAS A WOMAN. TONIGHT. MURDERED IN HER APARTMENT.
(link)
THE KILLER HAD SILENCED WEAPONS - NO-ONE WOULD HAVE HEARD. AND YET HE CHOSE TO KILL HER WITH HIS BARE HANDS.
(link)
SHE WASN'T EVEN WORTH A BULLET TO HIM.

5) Close on Batman/Wayne; head bowed, eyes closed; ashamed, guilty...

BATMAN
HER DAUGHTER WILL NEVER KNOW HER, ALFRED. HER WHOLE LIFE. I--
(link; small text)
I COULD HAVE KILLED HIM.

6) Small inset. Close on Alfred; sadness, sympathy, compassion in his eyes. He knows Bruce is torturing himself, but there's nothing he can say that will help...

PAGE 13

1) Exasperated, Batman/Wayne stands, leaning on the console, looking up at the huge computer screen on which we can see the blown-up image from his binoculars: the blurry silhouette of the G.I. Robot leaping from the distant skyscraper...

BATMAN
IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR SINCE I PUT ON THIS MASK, AND YET ALL I'VE DONE IS REACT. RESPOND. RETALIATE.
(link)
HOW CAN I EXPECT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS CITY WHEN ALL I DO IS MOP UP THE BLOODSTAINS... ?

2) Alfred steps forward on panel left, but Batman/Wayne turns his head just slightly - not enough to look round at him - and cuts him off curtly, snippy --

ALFRED
YOUR FATHER WAS A FORCE FOR GOOD BOTH IN GOTHAM AND BEYOND, MASTER BRUCE. PERHAPS HIS CHARITY WORK--

BATMAN
MY FATHER IS DEAD, ALFRED.

3) Hurt, but trying not to show it, Alfred smartly tugs down the front of his waistcoat to straighten it. Ever the dignified professional. The long stairway stretches up and away behind him.

ALFRED
... VERY GOOD, SIR.
(link)
THEN IF THAT WILL BE ALL.

4) View from close by Batman/Wayne - too close to see his face, just his lower body as he turns back to face Alfred, who is already walking back up the long staircase in the distant background. Alfred pauses on the stairway, turning back to us politely--

BATMAN
ALFRED... ?

5) Close on Batman/Wayne, looking straight at us with a thin almost-smile, softness and gratitude in his eyes now. He means it...

BATMAN
... THANK YOU.

PAGE 14

1) BIG, full-width establishing shot of the interior of a huge Wayne Aerospace research-and-development HANGAR. In the extreme foreground on panel left, a man in a dark silk suit - BRUCE WAYNE, although we don't see his face yet - pushes through a door into the hangar, his back to us. We can see a sign on the door saying "RESTRICTED PERSONNEL ONLY! THIS MEANS YOU!" with a graphic of a camera in a red circle with a line through it - no photography allowed. Wayne breezes in like he owns the place... which he does.

In the mid-ground on panel right, white-coated TECHNICIANS and boiler-suited ENGINEERS look up from the experimental jet engine they're working on, surprised - they're not used to seeing their boss down here.

In the distant background in the center of the panel sits a prototype experimental STEALTH JUMP-JET FIGHTER PLANE in a state of semi-disassembly. The plane has a flat, rectangular "thrust vectoring" jet exhaust and swing-wing airframe. Imagine a cross between the McDonnell Douglas/NASA X-36 drone and the (fictional) FA-37 Talon from the movie STEALTH. Designed by a bat. Wearing shades. (I can provide refs for inspiration if need be!). If viewed from above, with the wings open, the plane would resemble a crude triangular bat-shape, with the tail-fins on either side of the exhaust resembling the bat's "ears" and the cockpit nose as its "tail". Although we're probably too far away to make out any detail yet, this experimental VTOL ("Vertical Take-Off and Landing") stealth fighter will eventually become the first Bat-Plane (with a few "special modifications", as Han Solo would say) and it'll play a major role later in the series, so let's make sure it'll look bitchin' cool. Here, it looks less impressive, painted in gray undercoat with yellow engineering markings and a step-ladder leading up to the open cockpit.

A spider-like AUTOMATED SERVICING RIG sits behind the plane - an array of computer-controlled, hydraulically-articulated arms, like the kind you see in car factories, designed to re-fuel, re-arm, and repair the plane without the need for human engineers. The cockpit canopy is open, and although the plane is still fairly distant in this panel, we might be able to see that someone is crouching in the cockpit. A huge corporate logo/sign is fixed high on the hangar's back wall, hanging over the entire scene: WAYNE AEROSPACE.

2) Full-width panel. Angle from just above the jump-fighter, looking down past the open canopy to see Bruce Wayne standing there with one hand in his pocket, casually calling up to the man in the cockpit. Wayne has a light-hearted, easygoing manner with his staff which belies his power and status, playing the carefree playboy with *panache*. He's wearing a smart, double-breasted silk suit, timeless and stylish.

In the foreground, a MAN crouches in the cockpit, fiddling with some onboard system down near the back of the pilot's ejector seat - so he's kneeling on the seat, facing backwards, his ass towards the flight controls. He's black, his shirt sleeves rolled up, and he's too hunched-down for us to see his face here. Wires and computer cables snake over the side of the canopy, connected to whatever it is he's working on...

WAYNE
I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS IN FRONT OF THE STAFF, LUCIUS, BUT I THINK YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SIT FACING THE POINTY END.

PAGE 15

1) Low angle, looking up past Wayne from behind. LUCIUS FOX straightens up in the cockpit, smiling down at us, wiping his dirty hands with a rag. His tie is loose, his shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbow; a corporate executive who isn't afraid to get his hands dirty on the factory floor. One of the good guys. We should dig up some visual reference for him if necessary.

FOX
MISTER WAYNE! THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE, WE DON'T OFTEN SEE YOU DOWN HERE AT THE COAL FACE...

WAYNE
WELL, NEVER LET IT BE SAID I'M AFRAID TO GET MY HANDS DIRTY --
(link)
ACTUALLY, SCRATCH THAT. I JUST HAD A MANICURE.
(link)
SO, DO YOU, *UH*, HAVE A MOMENT... ?

2) Fox climbs down the step-ladder from the cockpit...

FOX
OF COURSE.
(link)
I ASSUME YOU'RE HERE TO BRUSH UP ON OUR BID BEFORE THE BIG MEETING TOMORROW, YES...?

3) Full-width panel. Wayne and Fox stand with their backs to us, admiring their beautiful plane like proud fathers...

WAYNE
WOULDN'T WANT LEXCORP TO THINK WE'RE A PUSHOVER. THAT AND, Y'KNOW, JUST CHECKING TO SEE YOU'RE NOT SLACKING ON MY DIME.
(link)
JUST TELL ME IT FLIES.

FOX
LIKE A HUMMINGBIRD. ALTHOUGH WE'RE HAVING SOME PROBLEMS GETTING THE ONBOARD SYSTEMS TO INTERFACE WITH THE AUTOMATED SERVICING RIG--
(link)
... YOU JUST GLAZED OVER, DIDN'T YOU?

4) Wayne smiles guiltily, putting a friendly arm around Fox's shoulder and gently steering him away. Leave enough space for back-and-forth speech balloons...

WAYNE
TRUTH IS, I ACTUALLY CAME DOWN HERE TO PICK YOUR BRAINS ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY. PURELY HYPOTHETICAL, YOU UNDERSTAND...

FOX
SHOOT.

WAYNE
ENERGY WEAPONS.

FOX
ENERGY WEAPONS.

<u>PAGE 16</u>

1) Close on Wayne, still with his arm around Fox's shoulder - serious now, confiding, secretive, his eyes drilling straight into the reader's...

WAYNE
MAN-PORTABLE ENERGY WEAPONS. WITH ENOUGH JUICE TO, SAY, FLASH-VAPORIZE A HUMAN BEING AT TWO KILOMETERS IN HIGH HUMIDITY CONDITIONS.
(link)
HYPOTHETICALLY.

2) Close on Fox - conspiratorial, the ghost of a smile on his lips and a twinkle in his eye. He doesn't know exactly what Bruce Wayne does on his nights off, but he knows he's a part of something more than meets the eye...

FOX
IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO, MISTER WAYNE, THAT'S QUITE A SPECIFIC HYPOTHETICAL.

3) Wayne also now smiles with a tinkle in his eye. We can tell these men are friends, sharing an unspoken understanding...

WAYNE
I'M AN ECCENTRIC BILLIONAIRE. HUMOR ME.

4) Widen to include both of them again. Fox shrugs expansively; Wayne listens intently. Room for back-and-forth dialogue.

FOX
WELL, WE DID DABBLE WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT A FEW YEARS AGO FOR THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. PHASED PARTICLE BEAM CANNON.

WAYNE
DID IT WORK... ?

FOX
SURE, EXCEPT FOR THE "MAN-PORTABLE" PART. THE POWER UNIT WAS SO HEAVY, YOU NEEDED A TANK TO CARRY THE DAMN THING AROUND.
(link)
SO WE SHELVED IT.

5) Pull back very high and wide. Wayne frowns, thoughtful; arms crossed, touching a fingertip to his lips in a contemplative gesture. All around them, technicians are hard at work...

WAYNE
TOO HEAVY FOR A MAN, *EH*... ?

PAGE 17

1) Low angle establishing shot of a respectable old Government building in downtown Gotham City; Greek-style columns and wide marble steps...

SENATOR
(from building)
AS YOU KNOW, GENTLEMEN, THE SHORTLIST FOR THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S MECHANIZED INFANTRY CONTRACTOR HAS BEEN WHITTLED DOWN TO YOUR TWO COMPANIES - WAYNETECH AND LEXCORP.
(link)
YOU RIVAL BIDS ARE DIRECTLY COMPETING FOR OUR CITIZENS' TAX DOLLARS - WHICH MEANS THAT, NOT TO PUT TOO FINE A POINT ON IT, ONLY ONE OF YOU IS GOING TO GET THE GIG.

2) Interior establishing shot of a large, wood-paneled meeting room. Respectable, "old money" vibe. A group of Senators is meeting with representatives of WayneTech and LexCorp, who sit on either side of a huge circular table. The LexCorp party sits on panel left, hidden in shadow. The Senator and his party in mid-panel, and the WayneTech party on panel right. The group of male and female Senators is led by SENATOR CRABTREE - a portly, respectable old fella - who stands and gestures to introduce BRUCE WAYNE...

SENATOR
WITH THAT SAID, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU BOTH FOR YOUR PRESENTATIONS, AND OPEN THE FLOOR FOR CLOSING STATEMENTS --
(link)
STARTING WITH WAYNETECH OWNER AND CONTROLLING SHAREHOLDER, MISTER BRUCE WAYNE.

WAYNE
SENATOR CRABTREE, THANK YOU.

3) Wayne stands to address the meeting, holding a small remote control device in his hand. Lucius Fox sits beside him.

WAYNE
AS YOU'VE SEEN, WAYNETECH'S REVOLUTIONARY NEURAL-RELAY CONTROL SYSTEM ALLOWS THE X-99 STEALTH INTERCEPTOR TO BE REMOTE-PILOTED FROM THE SAFETY OF A HARDENED BUNKER.
(link)

BUT THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY HAS
IMPLICATIONS EXTENDING FAR BEYOND
THE BATTLEFIELD...

4) Wayne gestures with the remote control, activating a large plasma wall-screen behind him. It lights up with blueprints and in-action photos of the O.G.R.E. - a squat, bulky, massively powerful humanoid robot, at least 10 feet tall. Heavy, rounded surfaces. Squat jet-engines are built into its back, allowing it to fly, although we don't need to establish that here. Although humanoid, it doesn't actually contain a human pilot; instead, the operator controls it via a remote "neural link" from miles away. It's designed to withstand titanic forces of pressure, heat, and impact, and could wade through molten lava or raise a shipwreck from the bottom of the Mariana Trench. Frankly, it looks like it could punch the Incredible Hulk clean through the planet and out the other side...

WAYNE
COMBINED WITH CIVILIAN APPLICATIONS
SUCH AS THE O.G.R.E. DISASTER-
RESCUE SYSTEM, IT COULD
REVOLUTIONIZE FIELDS AS DIVERSE AS
MINE CLEARANCE, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
HANDLING AND DEEP-SEA EXPLORATION.
(link)
FOR WAYNETECH, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT
TAKING LIVES - IT'S ABOUT SAVING
LIVES.

5) Close on LEX LUTHOR, his face obscured in shadow; his eyes drilling into us, sceptical and wry...

LUTHOR
AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, I'VE GOT A
BRIDGE I CAN SELL YOU.

6) Wayne smiles thinly, taking the interruption in good grace. He gestures across the table, politely conceding the floor to his competitor --

WAYNE
... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, OUR
DISTINGUISHED COMPETITION - LEXCORP
C.E.O., MISTER LEX LUTHOR.

<u>PAGE 18</u>

1) Lex Luthor stands, bringing him into the light. He is brilliant, polite, and focused. But although he can switch on the charm when he wants to, his blue-gray eyes are as hard and cold and sharp as interstellar hydrogen ice...

LUTHOR
SENATOR, YOU DON'T NEED ME TO TELL YOU WE LIVE IN A STRANGE AND DANGEROUS WORLD.
(link)
NOW, LEXCORP'S REVOLUTIONARY ADVANCES IN PSEUDO-SENTIENT WEAPONS SYSTEMS WILL ENABLE US TO PROJECT DECISIVE FORCE, GLOBALLY - WITHOUT THE UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN ERROR, AND WITHOUT RISKING A SINGLE AMERICAN LIFE.

2) Behind Luthor, a wall-screen lights up with patriotic images of fluttering flags and smiling soldiers hugging their families.

LUTHOR
THINK ABOUT IT. G.I. ROBOTS ON THE STREETS OF GORILLA CITY OR MOGADISHU WOULD MEAN NO MORE UNSIGHTLY BODY-BAGS ON THE EVENING NEWS --
(link)
AND LET'S FACE IT, WE ALL KNOW THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE AS FAR AS THE *ELECTORATE* IS CONCERNED.

3) Close on Bruce Wayne, frowning, leaning forward in his chair to say --

WAYNE
(to left)
BUT CAN YOU DESIGN A COMPUTER WITH A CONSCIENCE? CAN A MACHINE SHOW MERCY... ?

WAYNE
(to right)
I'M SORRY, MISTER LUTHOR, BUT ONCE YOU PUT THE DECISION TO TAKE A HUMAN LIFE IN THE HANDS OF A MACHINE...
(link)
... WELL, THAT SEEMS LIKE AN AWFULLY SLIPPERY SLOPE.

4) Wide. Luthor sits, facing Wayne across the table; both gesturing to make their points. Both firm, but courteous.

LUTHOR
YOU SAY THAT AS IF WE HAVEN'T ALREADY BEEN DOING IT FOR YEARS.
(link)
LANDMINES, FOR EXAMPLE.

OR CRUISE MISSILES THAT
INDEPENDENTLY HUNT FOR TARGETS --

WAYNE
I THOUGHT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT
BEING A FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE
WORLD. A MISSILE CAN'T KEEP THE
PEACE.

5) Close on Luthor, wry. Hard eyes.

LUTHOR
NO? I THOUGHT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT
THEY DID THROUGHOUT THE COLD WAR.
(link)
OR WAS THERE A GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR
EXCHANGE AND I MISSED IT?

PAGE 19

1) Biggish establishing shot. The street outside the big old government building. Wayne and Fox walk down the wide marble steps towards the roadside...

FOX
I GUESS THAT WENT WELL ENOUGH. THE
BOARD'LL BE MAKING THEIR FINAL
DECISION BACK IN WASHINGTON, BUT...
(link)
WELL, THEY SEEMED TO LIKE WHERE
WE'RE COMING FROM.

WAYNE
ALL THANKS TO YOU, LUCIUS. I JUST
SIGN THE CHECKS.

2) Close on Wayne, turning at the sound of a voice from off-panel --

LUTHOR
BRUCE WAYNE.

3) View from behind Wayne, revealing Lex Luthor walking towards him, flanked by smart-suited bodyguards and personal assistants. His long black limousine is parked at the roadside behind him, his chauffeur holding the door open - but Luthor decided to come over and introduce himself to Wayne instead. The car door is fully twelve inches thick - bomb-roof armor-plating, like the Presidential limo...

WAYNE
LEX LUTHOR.
(link)

IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE TO FINALLY MEET YOU. SHAME IT HAD TO BE UNDER SUCH ADVERSARIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

LUTHOR
THAT'S BUSINESS.
(link)
YOU DID WELL IN THERE. IT'S HEARTENING TO SEE YOU AREN'T JUST THE VACUOUS HEDONIST THE MEDIA SO LOVES TO PORTRAY.

4) Wayne shrugs off the compliment, grinning, playing the fool. He loosens his tie with one hand, throws the other around Lucius Fox's shoulder in a somewhat overly pally gesture --

WAYNE
OH, I'M THAT TOO. I CAN PUT ON A DECENT SHOW AS LONG AS I KNOW I'M LESS THAN TEN MINUTES FROM THE NEAREST MARTINI --
(link)
SPEAKING OF WHICH, CARE TO JOIN US? I CAN'T STAY LONG, BUT I'M SURE LUCIUS FOX WOULD LOVE TO PICK THOSE FAMOUS BRAINS OF YOURS...

PAGE 20

1) Luthor and Wayne both become serious now, facing each other levelly. Wayne stands with his hands in his pockets.

LUTHOR
I WAS IMPRESSED BY WHAT YOU SAID IN THERE ABOUT SERVING THE GREATER GOOD. WERE YOU SERIOUS, OR WAS THAT JUST A SALES PITCH?
(link)
BECAUSE IT HAPPENS TO BE AN ISSUE THAT'S CLOSE TO MY HEART...

WAYNE
IS THAT RIGHT.

2) Close on Luthor, unperturbed, deadly serious --

LUTHOR
WE'RE BOTH REALISTS. IT'S MARKET FORCES THAT SHAPE OUR SOCIETY - WHICH MEANS THAT, AS LEADERS OF INDUSTRY, IT'S OUR DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THAT SOCIETY.
(link)
TO DEFEND IT FROM OUTSIDE--

3) Same angle, even closer on Luthor. He turns his head slightly, eyes swivelling sideways and widening with surprise as he momentarily becomes aware of something significant happening just off-panel --

LUTHOR
(small text)
-- FORCES...

4) Full-width panel! Wayne suddenly DIVES at Luthor, GRABBING him around the waist and sending them both FLYING sideways in a full-on gridiron football tackle! It's sudden, violent, and wildly incongruous --

WAYNE
(jagged)
MOVE - !

PAGE 21

1) An ARTICULATED TRUCK suddenly falls nose-first into the sidewalk where they had been standing, as if dropped from a great height... which it was! The impact crumples the nose of the truck like tinfoil, the windshield exploding in a shower of glass fragments. Wayne knocked Luthor aside just in the nick of time, saving his life; Lucius Fox and Luthor's people all jump aside, frantically scrambling for their lives --

2) Wayne is already on his feet; alert, dynamic, suddenly Batman again in all but costume. Luthor lies sprawled on his backside next to him, staring up in shock at the sight before them --

3) The wrecked truck topples over, the back end CRASHING to the ground in a shower of debris --

4) A black 1955 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud suddenly SCREECHES to a halt next to them, the back end slewing around in a tightly-controlled police-style emergency stop. ALFRED leans out of the driver's window, wearing a chauffeur's uniform and cap, shouting --

ALFRED
MASTER BRUCE! GET IN - !

5) Close on Luthor, staring in horrified awe off at something off-panel, towering high above him --

LUTHOR
I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO SAY THIS,
WAYNE, BUT, *UH*...

PAGE 22

FULL-PAGE SPLASH! Pull back to reveal the WayneTech O.G.R.E. robot towering over us, standing in the middle of the street - large as life and twice as ugly! Menacing as hell, surrounded by the wreckage of smashed-up cars and lorries, it raises a car above its head, ready to throw it at Wayne and Luthor. The word “O.G.R.E.” is clearly stenciled on its torso, just in case we didn’t get it, and let’s make no mistake about it - it’s here to KILL! After all this talk, this is where we remind the readers they’re reading a goddamn SUPERHERO COMIC!

CAPTION
“ISN’T THAT ONE OF YOURS... ?”

END CAPTION
TO BE CONTINUED!